

Friends Bulletin

PACIFIC YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 8

MAY, 1970

BULLETS OF CIVILIZATION

"The people of Vietnam need rice, the Allies are kind and gentle. They increase the aid rapidly; bullets the color of blood. Oh in the name of peace, we, the Allied countries offer the two parts of the country these bullets of civilization."

These words were written by 24-year-old singer/composer Mien Duc Thahg, who was recently sentenced to five years at hard labor for "acts which weaken the anti-communist spirit of the Army and the Republic of Vietnam." This song is one of a collection of ten called "Songs from the Deserted Fields" which the Saigon writers union mimeographed in 1967.

Songs are often a good weathervein of a country, especially one under a dictatorship as ruthless as that of President Thieu. Though all anti-military action, writing and speech continues to be suppressed: "Mien Duc Thang is a pacifist. Pacifists are neutralists and neutralism is against the law"—III Corps Military Court statement in sentencing Mien) students, Buddhists and others continue to speak out. We as Friends must listen, though we may hear only the faintest echos of pain and death in the far-away night.

"THE PEOPLE NEED RICE . . ." According to Don Luce, to whom I am indebted for taking time to talk with me about Vietnam, at least one province is facing severe rice shortages. Inflation plagues all but the richest and corruption helps them become richer by the hour. Corruption in the broadest sense is destroying the social fabric of Vietnam and peace seems even more remote.

Stephen Thomas writes after a Chinese New Years vacation trip. In a letter to Catherine Bruner he writes of visits to Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore and Indonesia. He found Cambodia "peaceful and pleasant" with no hint of the recent overthrow of Sihanouk "except that the NVA was said to be circulating bogus money." He gave greetings from PYM to the Meeting in Singapore and "marveled at the development going on there." He also visited Indonesia and Java.

Inflation, caused by war conditions and U.S. and Vietnamese corruption, means that food and essential items are more and more difficult to buy. Defoliation has decreased the area under cultivation and Vietnam now must import about 300,000 tons of rice per year (a decrease from 1968 at 653,000 tons). The price index for food products is now at over 800 (1950-100) and the piastre black market rate is 350Vn for 1\$ U.S. (official rate 118).

This discrepancy between the real value and the official rate means that officials and the government are able to make a 200% profit just by buying the U.S. dollars from Americans at the official rate (which all private aid projects including the AFSC project feel compelled to do) and selling them back on the black market. The net effect of this is that about 70% of aid coming to Vietnam is kept by the government. Only 30 cents of every dollar even starts out with the agencies.

Naturally the million "official" refugees and 2 or 3 million unofficial ones who are supposed to be helped by this aid must do something to eat. It is estimated that between 150,000 and 250,000 girls serve as "temporary wives" to allied servicemen and U.S. government officials. More than 2,000,000 live off of the military as troops or in service industries connected with them.

The \$448 U.S. in aid does little to help the nation. It has ". . . encouraged dependence on foreign aid to such an extent that many South Vietnamese have ceased to believe that the Vietnamese can solve their own problems." "The general effect of the aid has been to widen the gap between the rich and poor." "Vietnam has been overrun with foreign and technical experts, feasibility experts, relief goods orphanages . . . social order has broken down." The majority of U.S. Aid has ". . . been caught in administrative bureaucracy and absorbed by corruption." (from World Council of Churches report prepared by Don Luce and Nguyen Tang Canh.)

"THEY INCREASE THEIR AID RAPIDLY: BULLETS THE COLOR OF

BLOOD. . ." Essentially the AID program, where it is not a cover for CIA activities, is a sop to the Vietnamese people and a smokescreen to cover the real effort of the U.S. policy in Vietnam. While assuming a "humanitarian" stance for their own peace of mind, the U.S. continues to support totalitarianism, destruction and death. Non-military aid is but a pittance of the money spent to fight the war. Military action is destroying the people's bodies and economic aid is destroying their self-respect, making prostitutes of their women and urchins of their children. To be sure there are many well intentioned people dedicating their lives to help, but they are far outnumbered by those whose purpose is to "search and destroy."

The disclosures of atrocities at My Lai are only a small indication of the brutality of *both* sides. Though the official position of the government of the U.S. is to discourage such activity, it has been widespread and is now being made into an official program, the Phoenix Program. Atrocities by the Allies are so widespread that the members of the AFSC project in Quang Ngai were not even aware of the incident until newsmen came. The Vietnamese people thought it so common that they did not bother to bring it up.

To fix blame is a difficult matter, especially when both sides seem to be equally at fault. But in the case of America, who after all originated the idea of "war crimes," the argument that "the other side started it first," or "but they are doing it too does not answer to the question of why *we are* doing it, and what responsibility we must bear for helping to create the situation in the first place.

Though many Americans are not themselves involved in torture and systematic extermination, we are paying for and training those who are. The Phoenix Program strives to systematically "eliminate" NLF elements and suspects from villages in VN. *Our* bombers and helicopters make raids on civilian areas and our allies, with our guns and money, are participating in widespread and admitted torture and killing. This is war crimes by proxy, with the full knowledge of the U.S. government. Any American in Vietnam over 6 months has a repertoire of horror stories which he will share if asked.

Recently two Germans were convicted of killing two people and sentenced to seven years to life. Will we be able to say that we didn't know what was happening?

And what about democracy? "OH, IN THE NAME OF PEACE . . ." Many Americans feel that the ultimate justification of this destruction is democracy. If the present situation in South Vietnam is any indication of what is to come, this glimmer of justification seems also to be merely a comfortable delusion.

People can be sentenced to five years at hard labor for "weakening the fighting spirit of the armed forces and people." Once in jail, records are often lost. Treatment in jail depends on where the prisoner is sent and his ability to pay off the corrupt prison officials. Torture and brutality are widespread. Methods include use of electrodes attached to sensitive parts of the body, water forced into the mouth and nose and constant beating.

There are now 250,000 people in jail, 50,000 without even the benefit of military court trials such as Mr. Mien received, according to the Vietnamese Senate Joint Interior and Judiciary Committee. One of Saigon's leading newspapers commented that this number was "never reached before, even under the dictatorial regime of the Ngo (Dinh Diem) Dynasty."

Again according to Don Luce, "The size of the National Police has grown with the repression. In 1963, there were 16,000 policemen in the country; there are now over 80,000. According to U.S. public safety advisors, the present plan is to increase the police force size to about 120,000 in 1970 and 163,000 by 1973."

Thus "law and order" will prevail with the help of U.S. advisors and money.

"WE, THE ALLIED COUNTRIES OFFER THE TWO PARTS OF THE COUNTRY THESE BULLETS OF CIVILIZATION." Now we are seeking to disengage from the battle, mostly because it seems that it cannot be won, not so much because it was wrong. "Vietnamization" will leave behind our proxies, armed and paid for by us. Though to many Americans this seems sensible, as a policy it will probably fail (an American scholar summarized the U.S. plan as "giving the Vietnamese the same things we had to fight a war we couldn't win.") and it does not exonerate our guilt, both as a nation and personally, for our role in this war.

This guilt, this responsibility, should be the basis for the most serious searching on the part of all Americans, for both the salvation of the nation and our souls.

STEPHEN THOMAS
Friend in the Orient

OUR MEETING FOR WORSHIP

The silent worship of a Friends Meeting purposes to provide an atmosphere of reverence for the experimental realization of the germinating, transforming life of God in the soul of the waiting, expectant worshiper. By turning inward, centering down, "that of God in every man" is sought for its own sake by the earnest seeker who is prepared to listen with attentiveness and readiness for commitment to what is given him. The highest exemplar of this is Jesus Christ, of whom John in his Gospel testified: "In him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men." The Life of the soul is then the Inner Light, the Prime Source of all true spiritual illumination and growth.

A worshiper may be sometimes moved by the Spirit to bear witness to his experience of Divine inspiration, sustenance, or guidance through a sharing with his fellow worshipers; or in seeking help, he might be moved to share perplexities or misgivings about his spiritual life. In either case, such messages should never be expressions of intellectual exercise, or incitement to discussion or controversy, but of a spirit of dedication and devotion which holds promise of binding the worshipers together in that inspiration, enlightenment, and unity which awareness of Divine Presence and Leadings alone can provide.

— Submitted by the Committee of
Ministry and Counsel,
Santa Monica Meeting

IT SEEMS PRESUMPTIOUS

The query for the Second Month reads: "Is the vocal ministry in your meetings exercised under the leading of the Holy Spirit, without prearrangement, and in the simplicity and sincerity of truth?"

This indicates that somebody wants to know whether the vocal ministry is God-inspired, and that somebody can answer. It seems to me presumptuous for anyone within or without the meeting for worship—whether it be ministry and oversight, the monthly meeting or the yearly meeting—to ask this question, for none can answer.

As soon as anyone attempts to answer he implies that he is qualified to sit in judgment upon the vocal ministry and decide whether or not it is of God.

No little trouble and heartache have been caused within monthly meetings by Friends who presumably regard themselves capable of judging whether or not vocal ministry is "exercised under the leading of the Holy Spirit." Should any worshiper want to set guidelines for the moving of the

Spirit in an effort to limit the amount of vocal ministry to his liking and have it tailored to his condition?

To expect each Sunday a heart-warming experience in a neatly wrapped package for one's personal needs is to miss the genius of the Friends meeting for worship. Going to meeting is taking potluck with God and other worshipers and neither looking down your nose nor turning it up at what is offered through the Spirit's guidance.

If we look and listen for God in all that happens in meeting we shall find Him in unlikely people and in "unpalatable" verbal contributions. In the process, unsuspected needs may be met, not the least of which could be discovery of the fact that God is bigger than we thought.

The query in question might more appropriately be addressed to the individual worshiper and read somewhat like this: "Do Friends in meeting so yield themselves to God that His Spirit may speak through them in their vocal ministry?" This is a soul searching question which each must answer for himself.

J. STUART INNERST

A QUERY ON BROTHERHOOD

(The following query was enthusiastically received by La Jolla Meeting and submitted to the Discipline Committee of Yearly Meeting.)

What are the implications of human brotherhood in our world and our time?

Do we try, in spite of the inertia of customary thinking and comfortable living, to see our world as it is: a life raft, already crowded, beset by growing dangers, on which two thirds of the people are hungry and one sixth (our group) are consuming sixty percent of the provisions?

As we use the familiar words, love, brotherhood, sharing, dare we ask ourselves what they mean in relation to these realities, and what they require of us if we would live without hypocrisy?

In what practical ways can we identify with the hungry and oppressed and, at the same time, retain and communicate our joy and faith in life?

Are we able to support justice as the foundation of peace, and at the same time to hold fast to our faith that peace, expressed in nonviolence, is the way to justice?

How does the suffering of our time deepen our concept of God?

HELEN M. BEARDSLEY
La Jolla Meeting

FRIENDS BULLETIN
1129 N. Catalina Avenue
Pasadena, California 91104

BRENT HOWELL, Editor

The official organ of news and opinion of Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

Second-class postage paid at Pasadena, California.
PUBLISHED monthly except bi-monthly in January-February and July-August. Deadline for copy is tenth of month preceding issue; except first of September, January, and July.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$3.00 per year. Monthly Meetings are encouraged to collect and subscribe for all their subscribers. Contributions beyond subscriptions are welcome to help meet actual costs and reduce Yearly Meeting subsidy. Contributions are tax exempt. Receipts sent on request.
ADVERTISEMENTS: Classified—five cents a word; subject to approval of contents.

RETREATS

The Worship and Ministry Committee of University Meeting scheduled the Meeting's Annual Spring Retreat for May 8-10 at Quaker Cove. Bellingham Meeting is participating also. Ministry and Counsel Committee of Orange Grove Meeting has planned a retreat focused on meditation and the worship experience on May 9 and 10 at Camp Cisquito.

Willamette Quarterly Meeting will have a retreat over the Memorial Day weekend at Camp Lane. Tentative topic for the retreat will be a continuation of the "new life styles" discussions at the quarterly meeting in February. There is also talk in the quarter of a possible fall retreat, probably at the same site over the Labor Day weekend.

PEOPLE

Ron and Cecile Rocz of Multnomah Meeting will be leaders of an AFSC work camp in Virginia this summer. Ron will be attending graduate school next year, possibly in the East . . . Amy Howell of Orange Grove Meeting will begin duties as counselor at First United Methodist Church of Glendale on May 11 after extensive training and service as a staff aide, counselor and group leader at the Pasadena Mental Health Center . . . Sylvia Thorne of San Francisco Meeting has returned to Atlanta and from there will go to Istanbul for a two-year teaching assignment in literature and art . . . Alexandra Docili of the same Meeting was one of fourteen "visionary painters" whose works were on exhibition at a Unitarian Church . . . Jon Johanning of Multnomah Meeting has resigned from Portland State University and will leave the Portland area at the end of the spring quarter . . . A sojourning letter has been sent by Honolulu Meeting to Penn Valley Meeting in Kansas City, Mo., for John Jaquette . . .

Harry Noble of Pima Meeting has received a I-O classification . . . News from La Jolla Meeting: Marie Jones now is in a walking cast. She and Ashton plan to live in Georgia. Alice Chislett and Paulette Leshan have been hospitalized and released . . . Steve Bridge of Monterey Peninsula Meeting has moved to Berkeley. Dorothy Ballon, a movement therapist and a former resident of the Peninsula, will look after the Meetinghouse for several weeks, and Paul Hanke has been hired to take care of the Meeting grounds temporarily .

PACIFIC YEARLY MEETING 1970
SCHEDULE

- SATURDAY, AUGUST 15
2:00-5:00 p.m. —Standing Committee (at call of chairman)
7:00-8:00 p.m. —Meeting for Worship
8:00-10:00 p.m. —Representative Committee (1)
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16
8:30-10:30 a.m. —Representative Committee (2)
2:00-3:00 p.m. —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (I)
Meeting for Worship
4:00 p.m. —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (II)
Family Gathering
Roll Call of Meetings
Introduction of New Meetings
Announcements
7:30-9:30 p.m. —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (III)
State of the Society
MONDAY, AUGUST 17
8:15-9:30 a.m. —Worship-Fellowship Groups
10:00 a.m.-12:00 —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (IV)
Report of Representative Committee
3:15-5:00 p.m. —Interest groups
7:30-9:30 p.m. —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (V)
The Interrelatedness of Our Concerns (Peace Committee, Social Order Committee, Representatives to Friends Organizations)
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18
8:15-9:30 a.m. —Worship-Fellowship Groups
10:00 a.m.-12:00 —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (VI)
Standing Committee Concerns Continued
1:30-2:30 p.m. —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (VII)
3:15-5:00 p.m. —Interest Groups
7:00-9:00 p.m. —Family Night
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19
8:15-9:30 a.m. —Worship-Fellowship Groups
10:00 a.m.-12:00 —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (VIII)
First Reading of the Epistle
Young Friends Report
Junior Friends Report
1:30-3:00 p.m. —Representative Committee (3)
3:15-5:00 p.m. —Interest Groups
7:30-9:00 p.m. —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (IX)
Budget
Reading Minutes of Previous Sessions
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20
9:00-10:00 a.m. —YEARLY MEETING SESSION (X)
Nominating Committee Report
Reading of the Epistle
Junior Yearly Meeting Report and Epistle
Young Friends Epistle
11:00 a.m.-12:00 —Meeting for Worship
Closing Minute

SOME EVENTS

San Fernando Meeting had a rummage sale planned for April 17-18. A fire broke out in a garage where rummage items were being stored. Therefore, the Meeting held a rummage and fire sale . . . Social Concerns Committee of University Meeting had a book sale on Easter Sunday, with proceeds going to the AFSC Nigerian Relief Project . . . Yoko Gates gave a koto concert April 12 sponsored by Eastside Meeting as a benefit for the Friend in the Orient program . . .

JOY AND RESPONSIBILITY

(Harry T. Wright, chairman of the Committee on Ministry and Oversight of Fresno Friends Meeting, submitted the following statement to College Park Quarterly Meeting.)

Let us be joyful and light of heart, for of such is the certainty of God. The tiny Alpine flower, fanciful in shape, delicate in shading, is adapted to its home, and its home was made for the plant. It delights the eye of him who has the patience to seek and examine. The quail cries "cuidado" to her scurrying chicks and so brings a smile to the human hearer who knows of the provision made to protect the young. The sharp scent of trichistema in the night recalls to the mind's eye the beauty that adorns the dry midsummer valley. The shock of cold water on a hot head calls for gladness that this should be. These are the pleasures of the senses. Is it not fitting that we recognize the joy they bring as a thanksgiving to God who provides the occasion and the awareness?

In our Queries, we Friends have not asked ourselves if we are expressing the joy we find in the Father's handiwork. Thereby we become less sensitive to the Light and further estranged from the Spirit. Perhaps we are so bemused by the social and economic tasks before us that we forget to appreciate properly the gifts that are here already. How ungrateful we are when we fear to seek joy and are ashamed to be light hearted! Let us be free to acknowledge the pleasure we give others and receive ourselves. As we desire simplicity, let us also "seek the joy of life to be found in simple things and in the results of good work well done."

While we rejoice in God's minor miracles, let us not be unmindful of our good fortune. We have lived in a time when the earth was still a jewel. Now we must accept our responsibilities for stewardship. Our children are asking "What have you done to our inheritance?" Many voices tell us we should take notice of the speed with which we are converting our home into a junk heap. There is no clean air in our country. Lake Erie is dead. The oceans are becoming poisoned. We may have thirty, we may have a hundred years in which we may still act to insure the continuation of the life the Lord has given us and which we have received with joy.

To keep our environment wholesome, to preserve this land, these seas, loaned to us for a brief time, we have problems to solve: population, pollution and depletion of natural resources. Of these the problem of population is possibly the most pressing. The absolute increase in numbers of mouths to feed will drive us to ever more frantic efforts to grow more food by using more fertilizers that impoverish the soil and that accumulate nitrates in rivers and seas. For larger harvests we shall use more insecticides to destroy our fellow earth dwellers: bugs, birds and bullfrogs. To reduce this pressure on our resources, world population must be stabilized. It would be seemly for Friends to accept their part in this by at least recommending family limitation. Additional measures may commend themselves, such as including family planning in service projects or supporting such work by other agencies.

If Friends do support family limitation, there is a consequent moral or ethical consideration to which they must give thought. Families may be smaller, but human sexuality will not be less. Are we to avoid thinking about this simply because we have avoided it heretofore? If this be

true, it is not a good reason to delay longer. We can at least start by affirming that the most satisfactory, the most joyous of human relationships is a loving marriage. This is a beginning. We must also take into account the burden put upon those for whom marriage is delayed or not possible. It is not enough to say to them only "Thou shalt not." There is a new freedom of association between men and women. The old tabus are thought to be worthless. Can we accommodate this new freedom honestly, humbly and wisely? We should not condemn, we need not condone, but we must recognize what does in fact exist. Let us give thought to the counsel we may offer. Nor should Friends fail to say that between men and women there is love and joy.

It is recommended that Pacific Yearly Meeting establish a group to compose a statement on the implications of human sexuality. Much groundwork has been done by a group of English Friends. Six years ago they published a revised edition of "Towards a Quaker View of Sex." If the Pacific Yearly Meeting study group only matched the conclusions drawn by the pamphlet against the experiences since its publication, they would serve us well. It is hoped that they would be moved to make more specific recommendations or a stronger statement. We cannot escape the knowledge that our attitudes are undergoing a tumultuous change.

For our own sakes, for the sake of our children, we need to seek in silence a leading of the Spirit to a witness as profound as the renunciation of war. Our way is surely neither a retreat to a discredited puritanical past nor a surrender to contemporary hedonism. Let us seek a Friendly expression on responsible love.

HARRY T. WRIGHT

CONCERNS

There is a possibility of setting up a draft-counseling office in East Palo Alto, according to Alan Strain. Money is needed to stock the office with basic reference materials. Individuals may send contributions to Nairobi Community Center, a tax-exempt organization, for this purpose . . . Norman Goerlich sends a request from AFSC that Meetings assist in support of a project in East Oakland: a community center set up by the Black Panthers. AFSC has advanced \$4,500 for a down-payment loan. Individual members may support the project by sending gifts directly to the AFSC to replace money lent . . .

Social Concerns Committee of University Meeting is considering how the Meeting might relate itself to the problem of prisoner treatment. Beginning with concern for the treatment received by Irwin Hogenauer—and an investigation into it—members have been exercised by the question: what happens to the prisoner without the backing of friends and relatives? . . .

Monterey Peninsula Meeting is studying the desirability of establishing a Committee on Ministry and Counsel . . .

WEDDING

LORENZ-SMITH. The first wedding in the history of Monterey Peninsula Meeting joined Roger Sheets Lorenz and Joan Braverman Smith. Held on February 1, 1970, the wedding was attended by the bridegroom's mother, Nellie Lorenz, and the bride's two children, along with Friends from many meetings. Roger Lorenz is clerk of Monterey Peninsula Meeting.

SAND AND SEA

One Sunday at Meeting for Worship I could not seem to pray. Perhaps my mind was dissipated and I had not prepared myself with sufficient peaceful thoughts prior to entering. I tried several ways to meditate and even employed the Ignatian method, but to no avail. Suddenly it seemed as if God had put a poem into my head. I had never heard it before, but the words came to me and I said:

Oh, Lord, today I cannot pray

So now I have a notion:

Make me the sand along the shore.

You be the soothing ocean.

So I made myself nothing but sand and I let the wave wash over me, and soon the water became waves of God's love. God could smile on me because I had relaxed.

CAROL VOLK
San Francisco Meeting

AN OFFERING

When recently I was facing a trying time, the prayer, or dedication, below shaped itself in my mind and brought me fortitude and comfort. As it may also do so for others, I am offering it to you.

When life weighs heavily upon me and friends forsake me, then is the need for my strength, for my giving of the courage and the joy that is within me in order that neither I nor others need go down into the depths. For in the willingness to give, and in the giving when it is needed, are our burdens lightened. May my perception be keen and understanding that I may enjoy whatever may happen as an opportunity for happy response rather than as a weight that presses me down.

DONALD BEACH
University Meeting

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